Patent Claims

1. System (1, 2, 3) for running at least one software program (13, 14, 15, 16) which needs to be enabled for open-loop and/or closed-loop control by means of at least one automation component, in which the software program which needs to be enabled can be enabled via a license key (5, 6, 7), with a license key handler (8, 9, 10) being provided for enabling,
characterized in that a license key handler manager (20) can be connected for data purposes to at least one or to two or more license key handlers (8, 9, 10).

2. The system (1, 2, 3) as claimed in claim 1,
characterized in that
at least two license key handlers (8, 9, 10) are of different types.

3. The system (1, 2, 3) as claimed in claim 1 or 2,
characterized in that
the license key handler manager (20) is provided in order to identify at least two license key handlers (8, 9, 10), and/or in order to identify a license requirement.

4. The system (1, 2, 3) as claimed in one of claims 1 to 3,
characterized in that
the system (2, 3) is a distributed system (2, 3) and has at least two automation components (24, 25, 26), which have a data link (28) to one another, in which case the software program (13, 14, 15, 16) which needs to be enabled can run on one of the automation components (24, 25, 26), and the license key handler manager (20) can run on this and on a further automation component (24, 25, 26)

and has a data link (28) to the license key handler (8, 9, 10) which can run on at least one of the automation components (24, 25, 26).

5. The system (1, 2, 3) as claimed in one of claims 1 to 4, characterized in that
the license key handler manager and the license key handler are integrated in one another in a software program.

6. The system (1, 2, 3) as claimed in one of claims 1 to 5, characterized in that
the system has at least one automation component (24, 25, 26, 27) or is an automation component (24, 25, 26, 27), with the automation component (24, 25, 26, 27) having runtime software.

7. A method for enabling the running of at least one software program (13, 14, 15, 16) which needs to be enabled and can be enabled via a license key (5, 6, 7) on the basis of which a license key handler manager (20) identifies at least one of optionally at least two license key handlers (8, 9, 10) which are connected to it.

8. The method as claimed in claim 7, according to which, after the running of a software program (13, 14, 15, 16) which needs to be enabled has been enabled, the license key handler manager (20) transfers the license key (5, 6, 7):
a) to a license key memory (30, 31) of an identified license key handler (8, 9, 10) and the license key handler (8, 9, 10) receives the license key (5, 6, 7) from the license key memory (30, 31), or

b) to a license key server (23), which passes on the license key (5, 6, 7) for storage to the license key memory (30, 31) or supplies the license key (5, 6, 7) to the license key handler (8, 9, 10), or

c) to the license key handler (8, 9, 10), with the license key handler (8, 9, 10) storing the license key in the license key memory (30, 31)

and the running of the software program (13, 14, 15, 16) is enabled by a check or inspection of the license key (5, 6, 7) in the license key handler (8, 9, 10) by the software program (13, 14, 15, 16) which needs to be enabled.

9. The method as claimed in claim 8,
characterized in that
the license key (5, 6, 7) enables a software program (13, 14, 15, 16) which needs to be enabled and runs in an embedded runtime system in an industrial automation system or a drive system which, in particular, has at least one automation component (24, 25, 26, 27).

10. The method as claimed in one of claims 8 or 9,
characterized in that
the software programs (13, 14, 15, 16) which need to be enabled required license keys (5, 6, 7) of a different type, and the license key handler manager (20) transfers the license key (5, 6, 7) of one type to a license key handler (8, 9, 10) of this same type.

11. The method as claimed in one of claims 8 to 10,
characterized in that
the license key handler manager (20) is run on a

personal computer.

12. The method as claimed in one of claims 8 to 11, characterized in that
a license key handler (8, 9, 10) is associated with a license key memory (30, 31), and the license key handler manager (20) transfers the license key (5, 6, 7) to the license key memory (30, 31).

13. The method as claimed in one of claims 8 to 12, characterized in that
a license key handler (8, 9, 10) is associated with a license key memory (30, 31), and the license key handler (8, 9, 10) stores the license key (5, 6, 7) in the license key memory (30, 31), and/or reads the license key (5, 6, 7) from the license key memory (30, 31).

14. The method as claimed in one of claims 8 to 13, characterized in that
a license key handler manager (20) is associated with a plurality of license key handlers (8, 9, 10) of a different type which handle license keys (5, 6, 7) of a different type, and the license key handler manager (20) identifies the type of license key handler (8, 9, 10).

15. The method as claimed in one of claims 8 to 14, characterized in that
the license key handler manager (20) has modules (35, 36, 37) added to it for managing a license key handler (8, 9, 10) of a new type.

16. The method as claimed in one of claims 8 to 15, characterized in that the license key handler manager (20) is provided with license keys (5, 6, 7) via the Internet (40).